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23 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Security Staff, Office of Special Activities

SUBJECT : Conversation with Mr. Joseph Scott, D/I&R, Department of State, Regarding Security of C Triple Prime Camera in U-2 Aircraft

1. On behalf of Mr. U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Scott called me to say that when Mr. Johnson briefed Secretary Rusk on Mr. McCone's comments on the Special Group meeting on 17 October regarding the use of the C Triple Prime camera on a BRASS KNOB flight in Cuba recently, that the Secretary expressed concern over the security aspects of using a CORONA camera in an IDEALIST vehicle, especially as it related to the possible loss thereof in a country like China, where, for example, Mr. McCone had reportedly said it might be used next.

2. I told Mr. Scott that I felt his security fears in this case were essentially groundless, since in its aircraft configuration it would be difficult to identify it as a space camera unless the Soviet Bloc had recovered in tact an identical machine from a CORONA mission, which I described as statistically not very likely. I also told him that while it was in my view an extremely ingenuous adaptation of a piece of equipment designed for one purpose serving another, it by itself would not represent the last word in the state of the art in satellite camera systems even were it to fall into enemy hands and to be matched up with a prototype they might have knowledge of.

3. I also attempted to impress on Mr. Scott the fact that the Director's enthusiasm notwithstanding there was only one such IDEALIST camera in being at present, that there was virtually no immediate spare parts support in hand, and that from our standpoint we considered it a test vehicle. I gather from Scott that the Secretary inferred that this was at present a full-blown, worldwide capability. I told Mr. Scott that we were in fact moving toward a development involving the C Triple Prime camera which would double its

NRO and DOS review(s) completed.

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swath width and hopefully make it operational something on the order of six months from now. He seemed satisfied with this explanation, and I rather imagine he will report these matters to Mr. Johnson.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
Acting Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

cc: DD/S&T

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